

SILLOWAY, P. M.

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WHITMAN, F. N.

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SHEARWATERS. By R. M. Lockley. J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., London, 1942:
5¼ x 8¼ in., xii + 238 pp.; 31 photographs, 4 figs. and 4 maps. 15s. net.
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Some years ago on a remote island off the Welsh coast, R. M. Lockley turned from farming and shepherding to bird watching and writing. No one since Hudson has, I think, combined the latter activities so satisfactorily and so well. As a professional writer who must keep one eye on the public taste, Lockley exhibits none of the glittering superficiality of Peattie. He has Selous' love of truth and Howard's caution. Writing as easily as Burroughs or Hudson, he is sensitive to character in both birds and men. Still young, and unknown to most Americans, he is a man to watch and an author to read.

The present volume brings together the author's observations on the Manx Shearwater, hitherto scattered in English periodicals. The result is essentially a life-history study, set in a popular framework. Personal in its approach, it lacks the scientific trimmings of full references, graphs and clear summarization. Near the end there is a slight loss in continuity. For the most part, this is an intensive study based on but a few pairs of banded birds. Carried on with increasing penetration over a ten-year period, the observations yielded new and fundamental facts which help to explain the lives of other Procellariiforms—surely one of the more abundant and least known families of birds in the world. The two sexes are found to mate for life; they may relieve each other of incubation duties at periods as long as nine days, and during such intervals they may forage over 500 miles away.

Among the birds studied were Adam and Ada, Bill and Bess, Carol and Caroline. Each had its own personality, but the anthropomorphic twist is never overdone. Youngsters like Hoofti and Toofti lighten the pages. Homing experiments stir one's imagination. The end product is delightful reading and good ornithology.

Attention should be called to the distribution price in America. It is, to say the very least, discouraging.—J. J. Hickey.